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Parker et al.

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- (54) **INTEGRATED MICROOPTIC IMAGER, PROCESSOR, AND DISPLAY**
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G02B 3/00 (2006.01)
(Continued)

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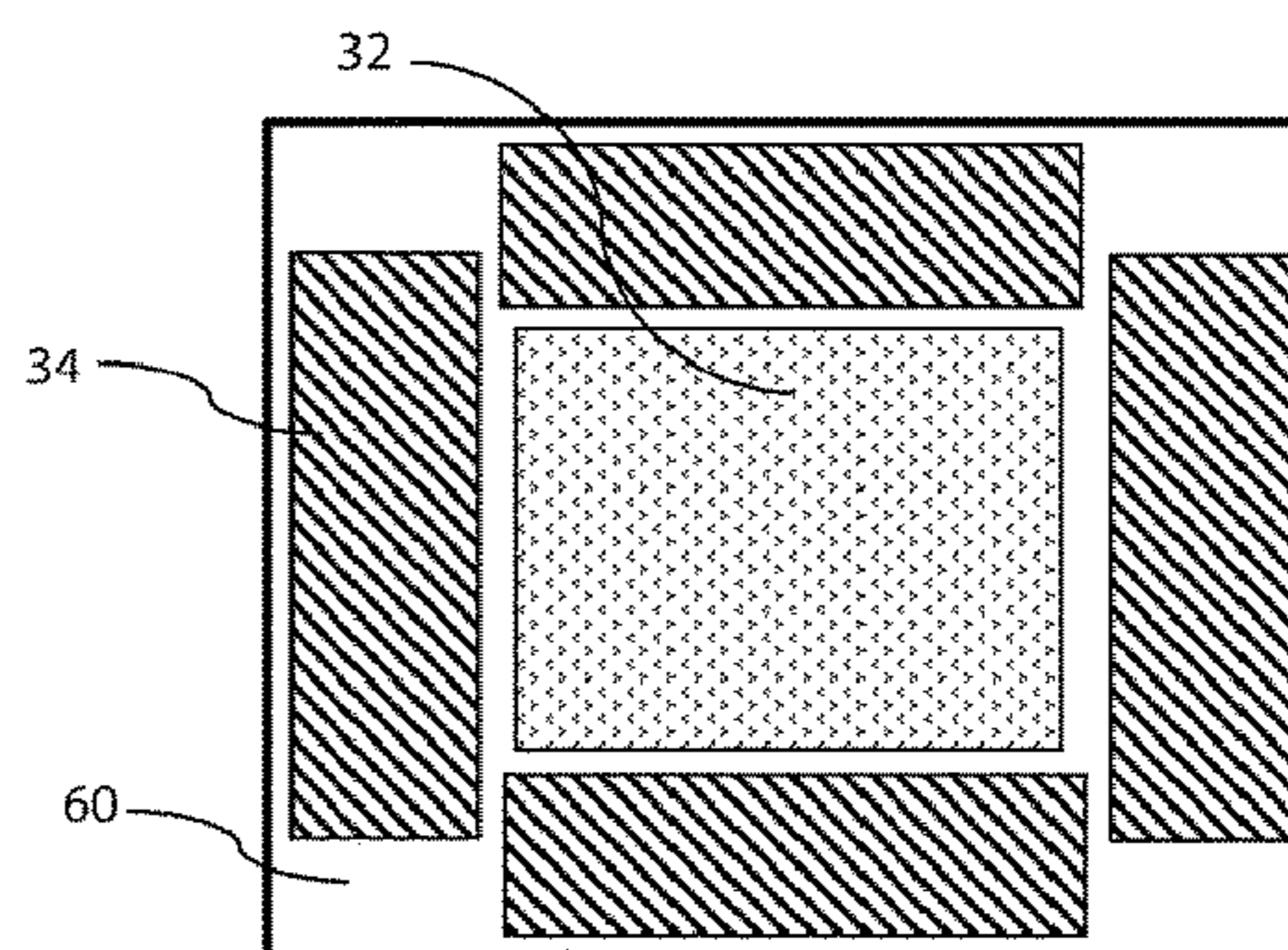
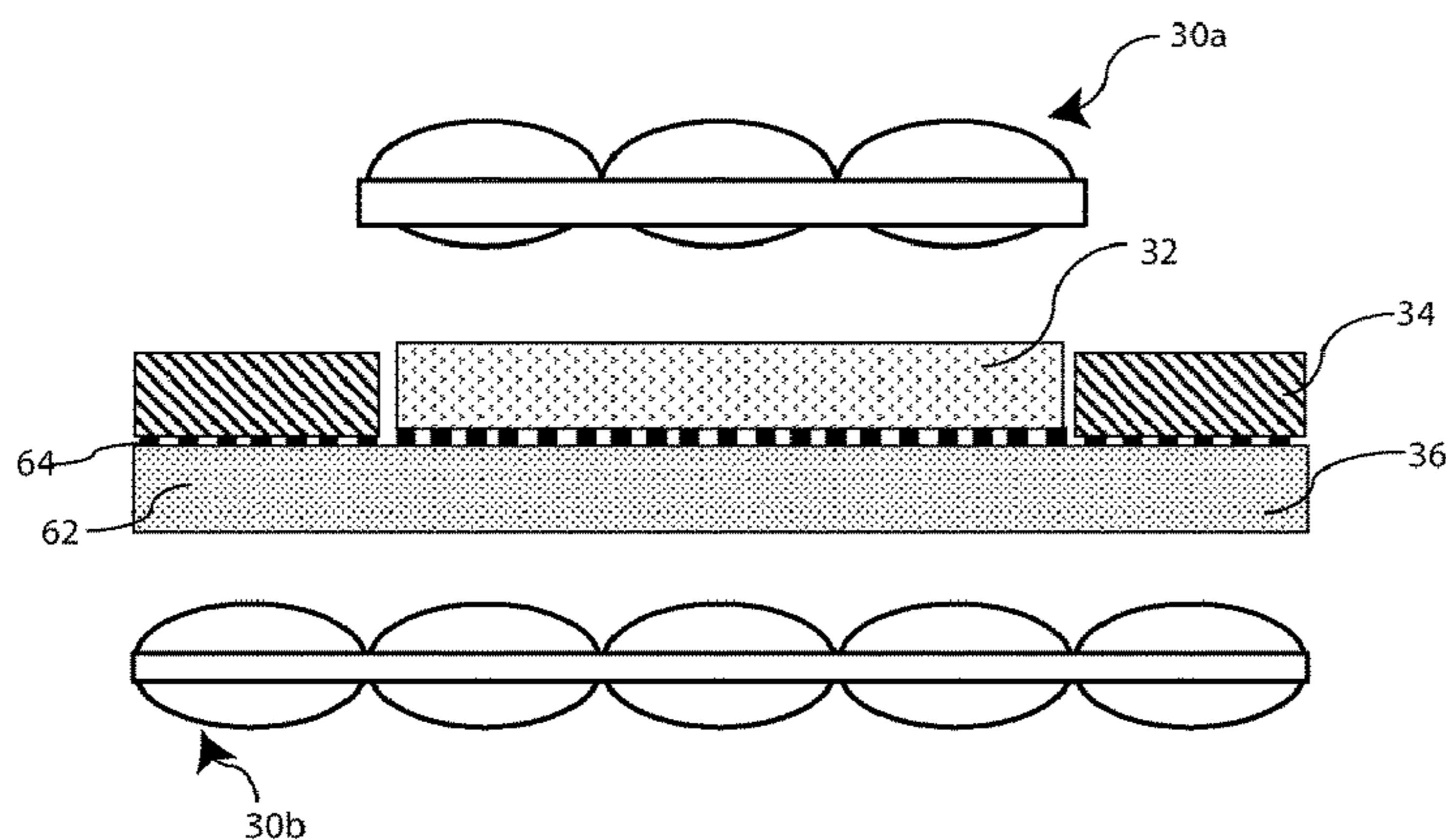
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(57) **ABSTRACT**
An optical system for displaying light from a scene includes an active optical component that includes a first plurality of light directing apertures, an optical detector, a processor, a display, and a second plurality of light directing apertures. The first plurality of light directing apertures is positioned to provide an optical input to the optical detector. The optical detector is positioned to receive the optical input and convert the optical input to an electrical signal corresponding to intensity and location data. The processor is connected to receive the data from the optical detector and process the data for the display. The second plurality of light directing apertures is positioned to provide an optical output from the display.

21 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets



Related U.S. Application Data

continuation of application No. 15/185,437, filed on Jun. 17, 2016, now Pat. No. 10,067,348, which is a continuation of application No. PCT/US2014/070991, filed on Dec. 17, 2014.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/963,928, filed on Dec. 17, 2013.

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H04N 5/33 (2006.01)
H04N 13/232 (2018.01)
H04N 13/307 (2018.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **G02B 3/0068** (2013.01); **G02B 27/0101** (2013.01); **G02B 27/017** (2013.01); **G06T 11/60** (2013.01); **H04N 5/332** (2013.01); **H04N 13/232** (2018.05); **H04N 13/307** (2018.05); **G02B 2027/0174** (2013.01); **G02B 2027/0178** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

USPC 345/1.1, 8, 633, 690
 See application file for complete search history.

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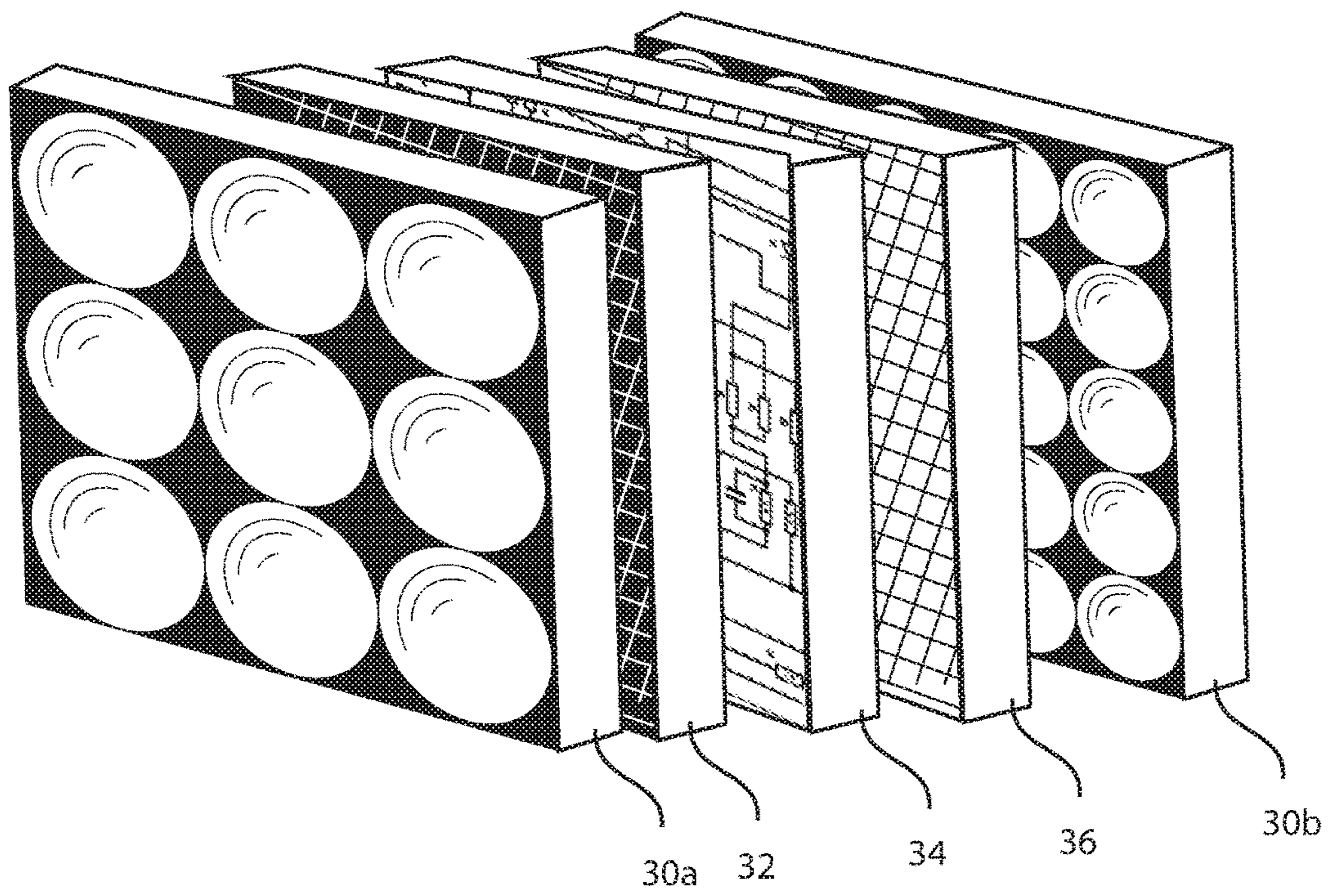
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Fig. 1



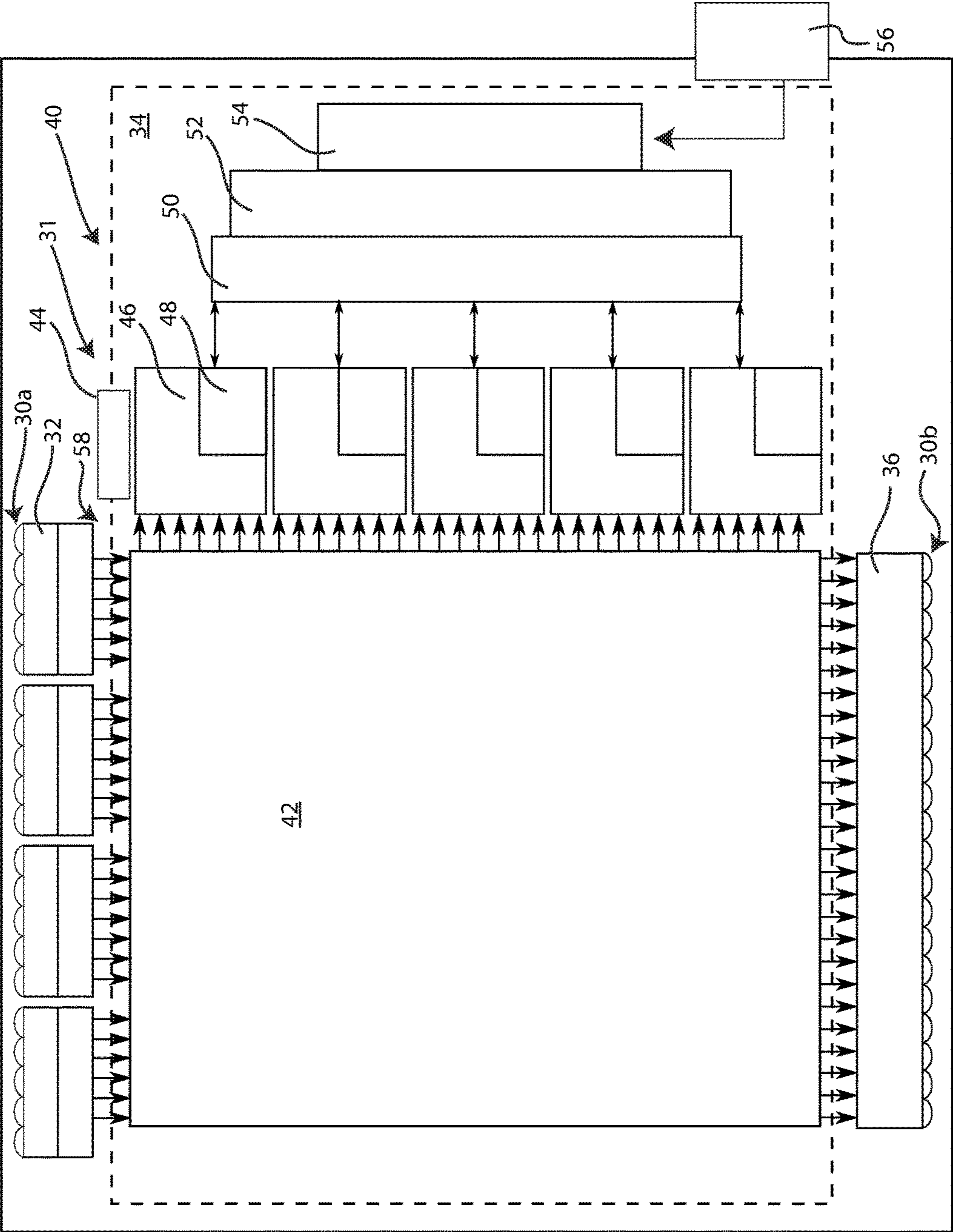


Fig. 2

Fig. 3A

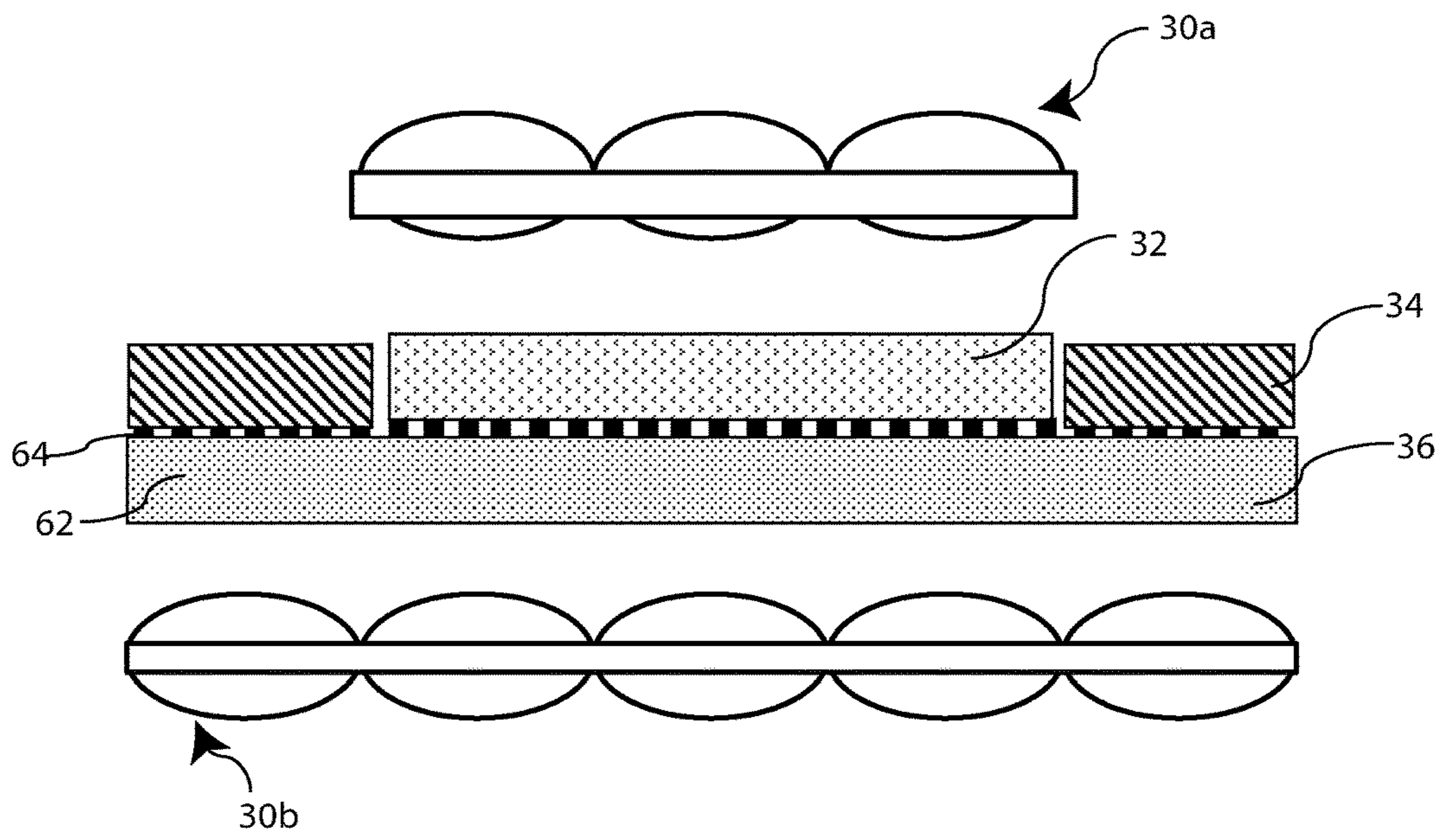


Fig. 3B

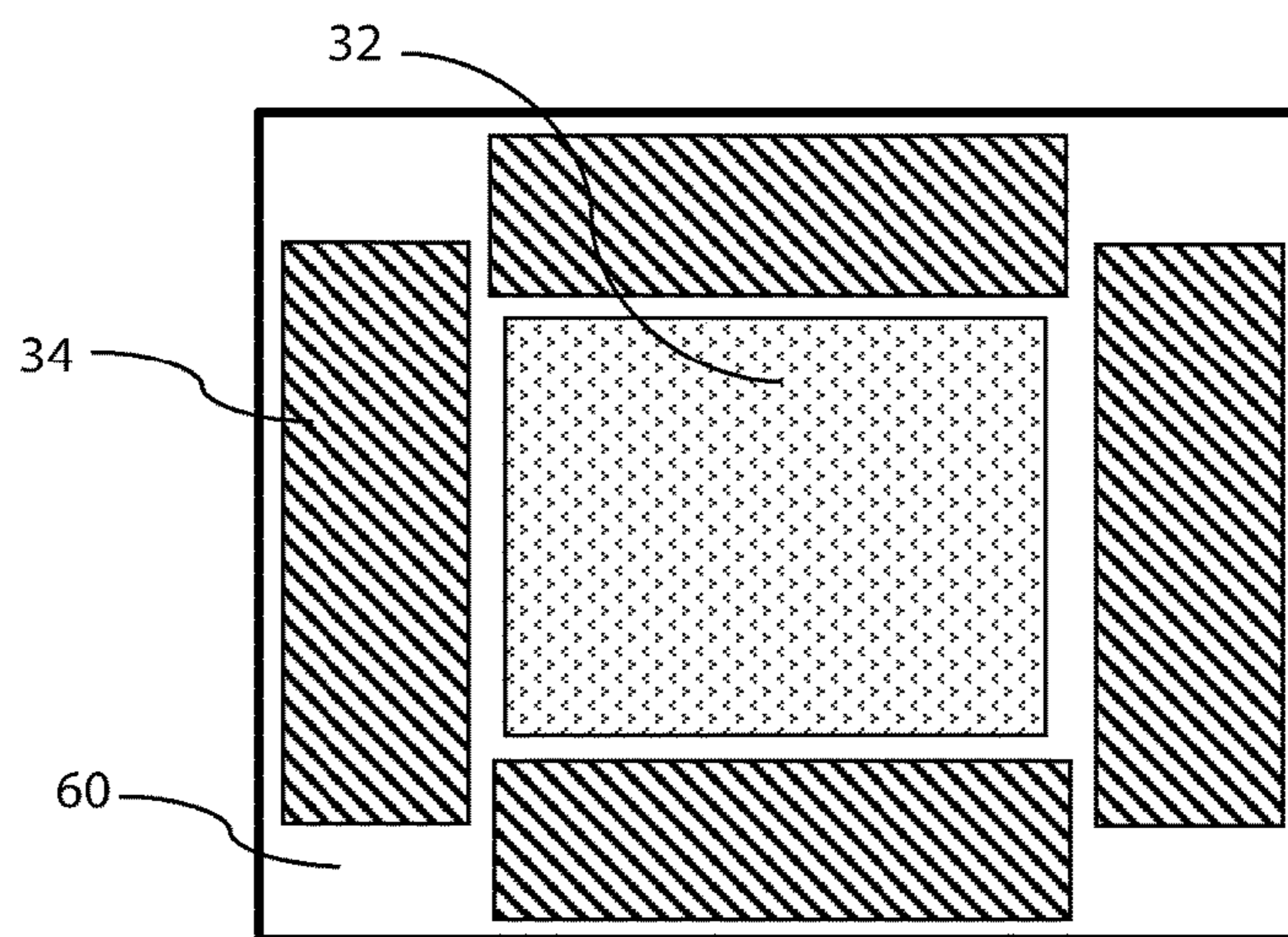
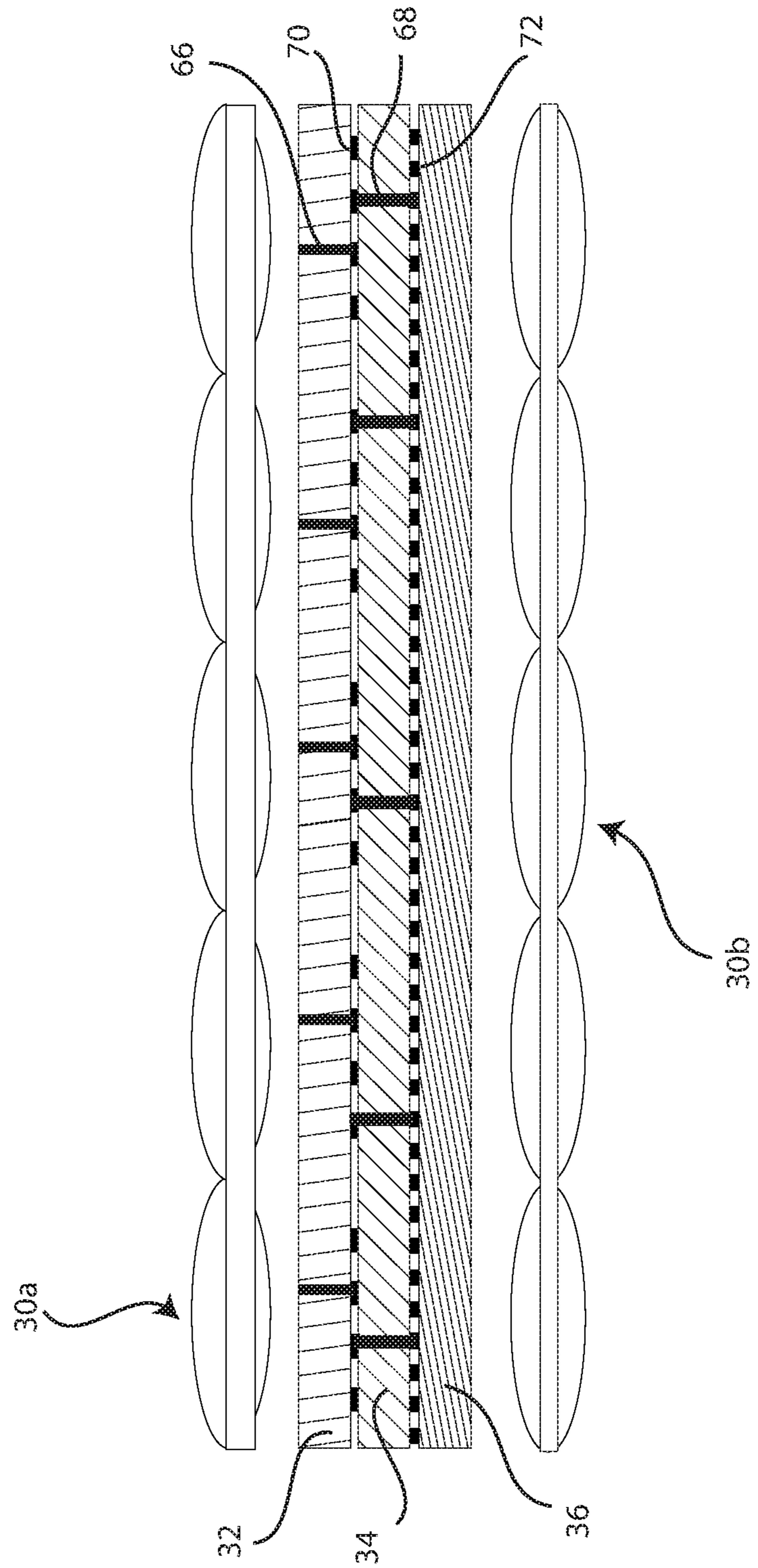


Fig. 4



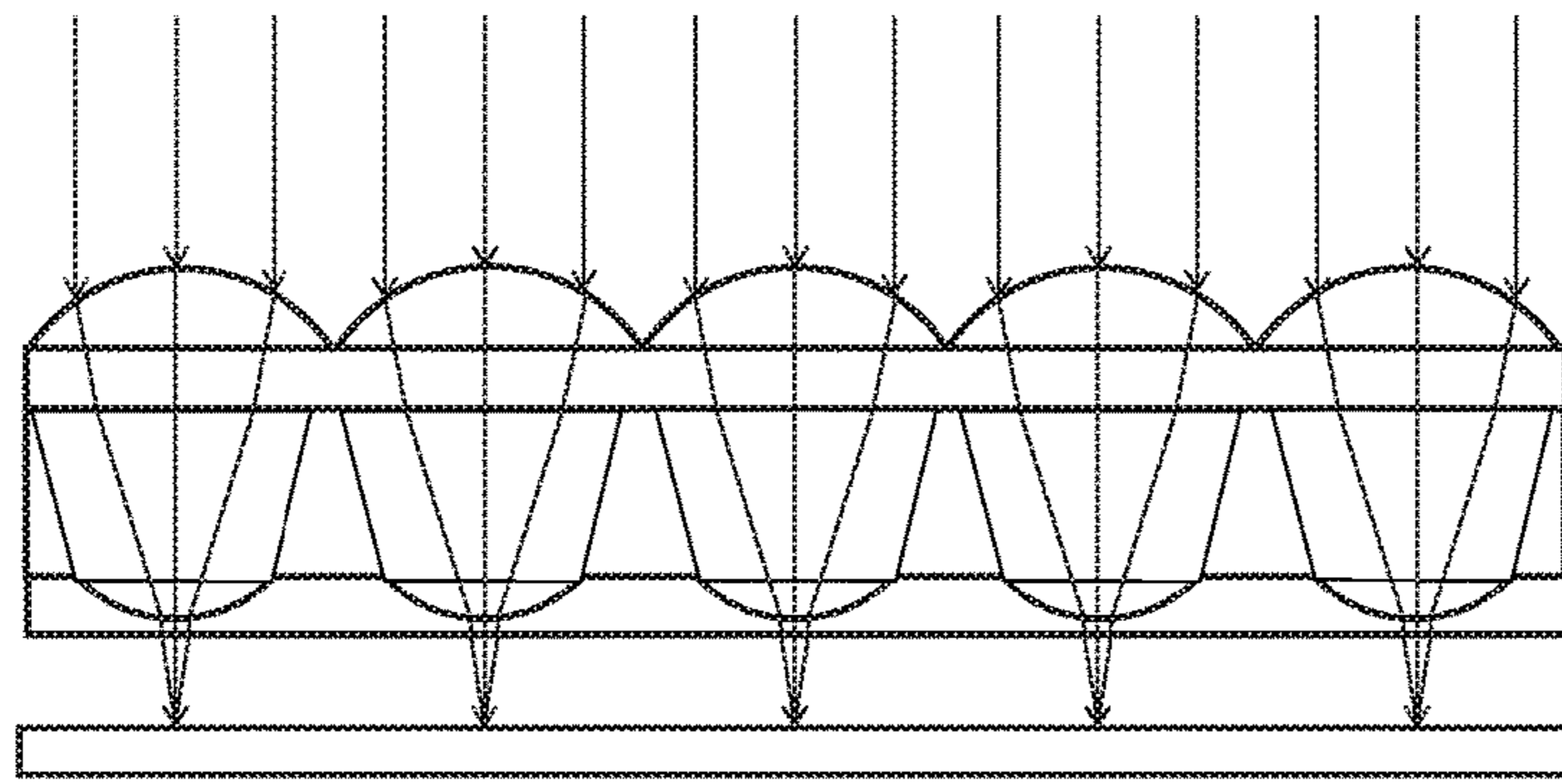


Fig. 5A

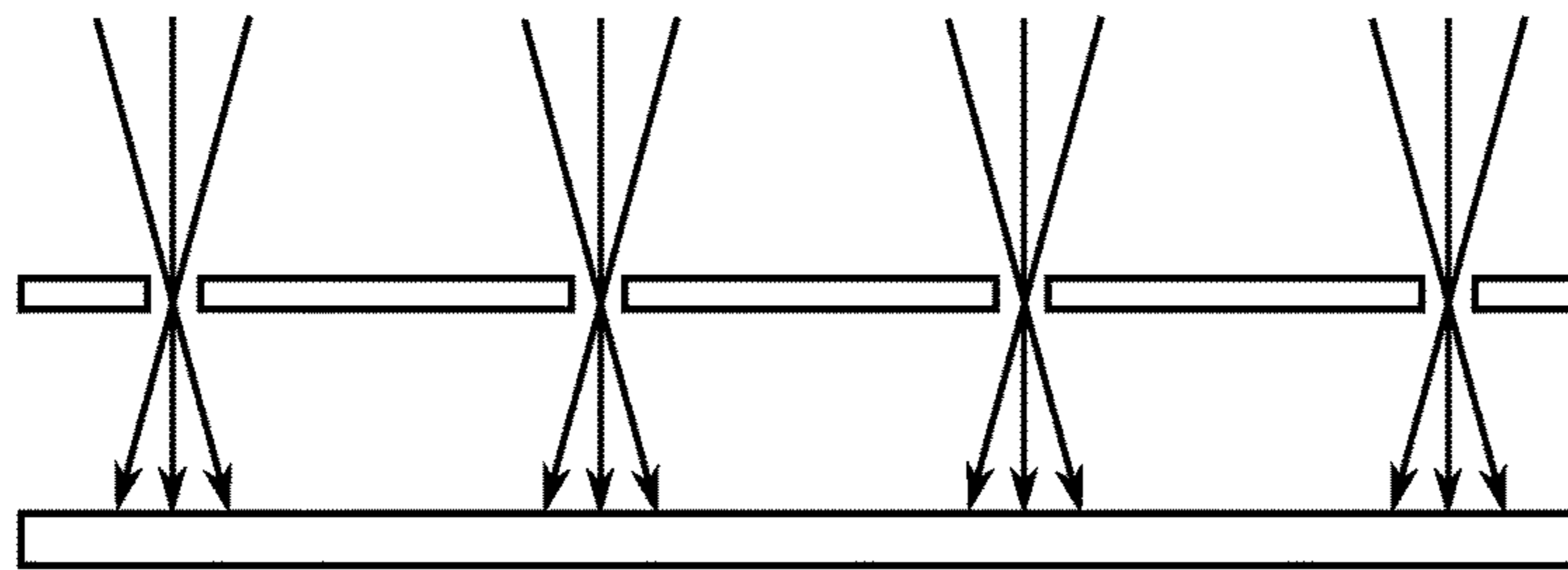


Fig. 5B

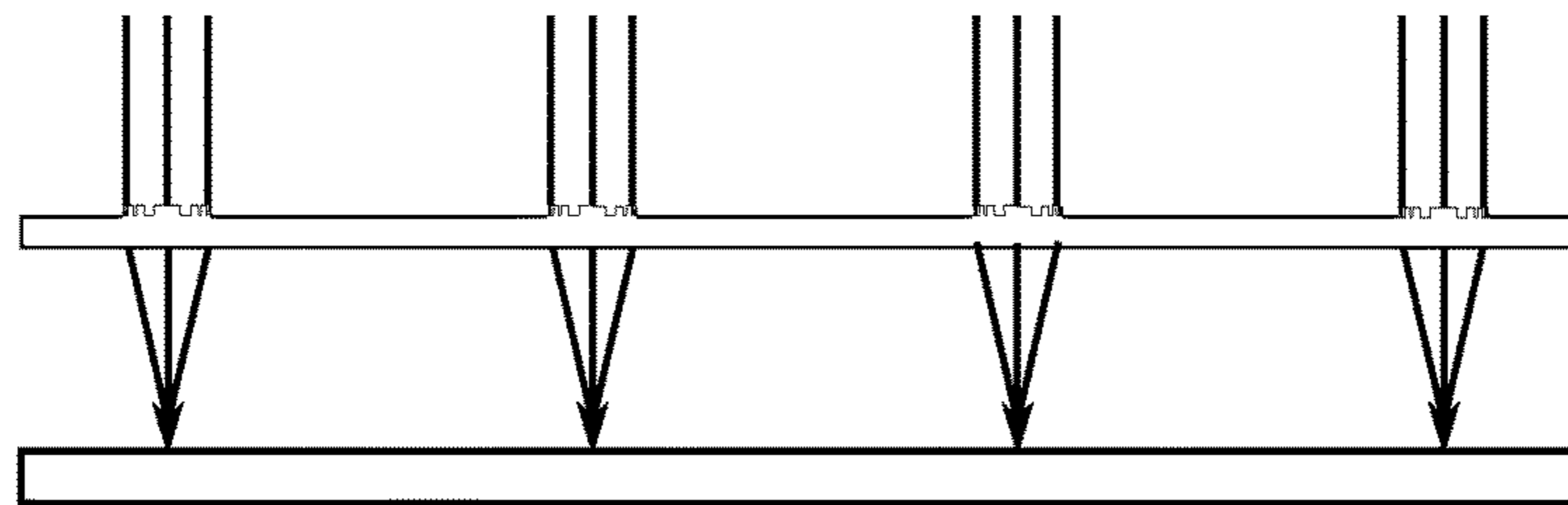


Fig. 5C

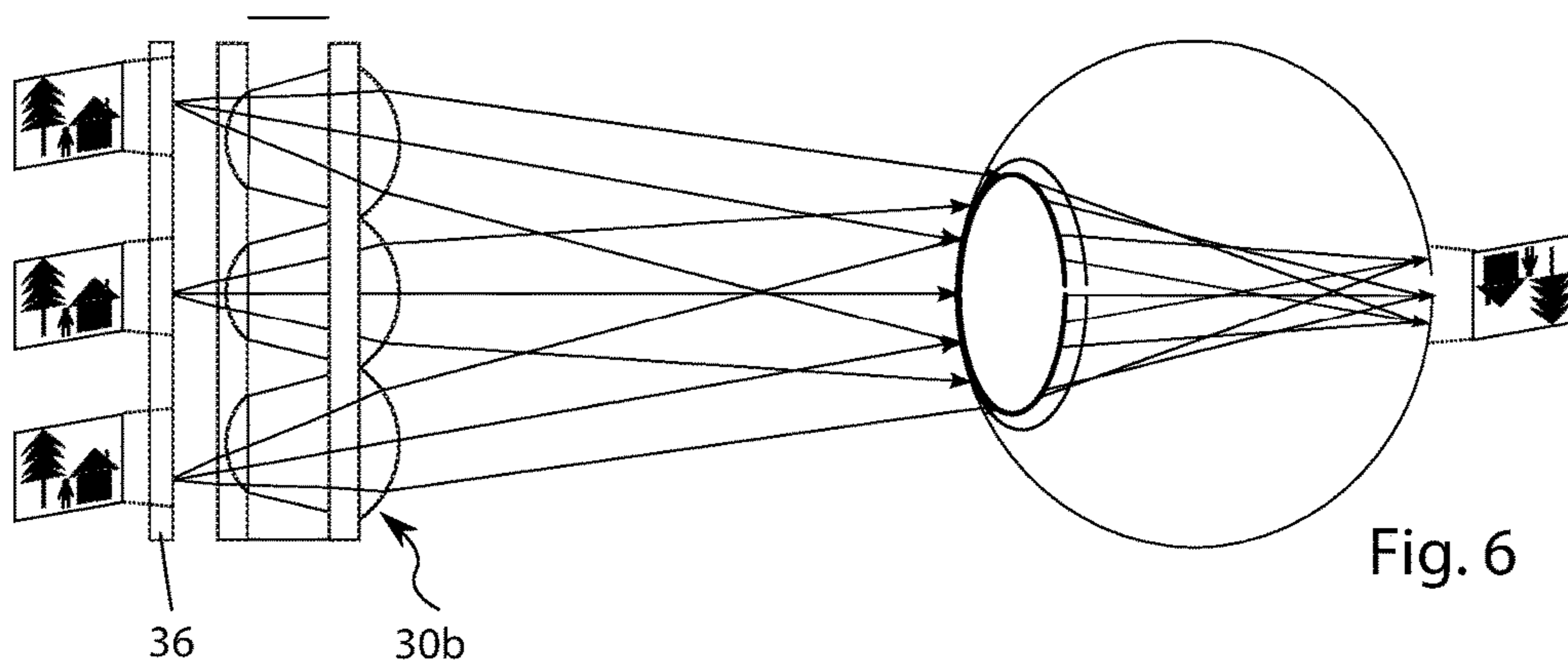


Fig. 6

Fig. 7A

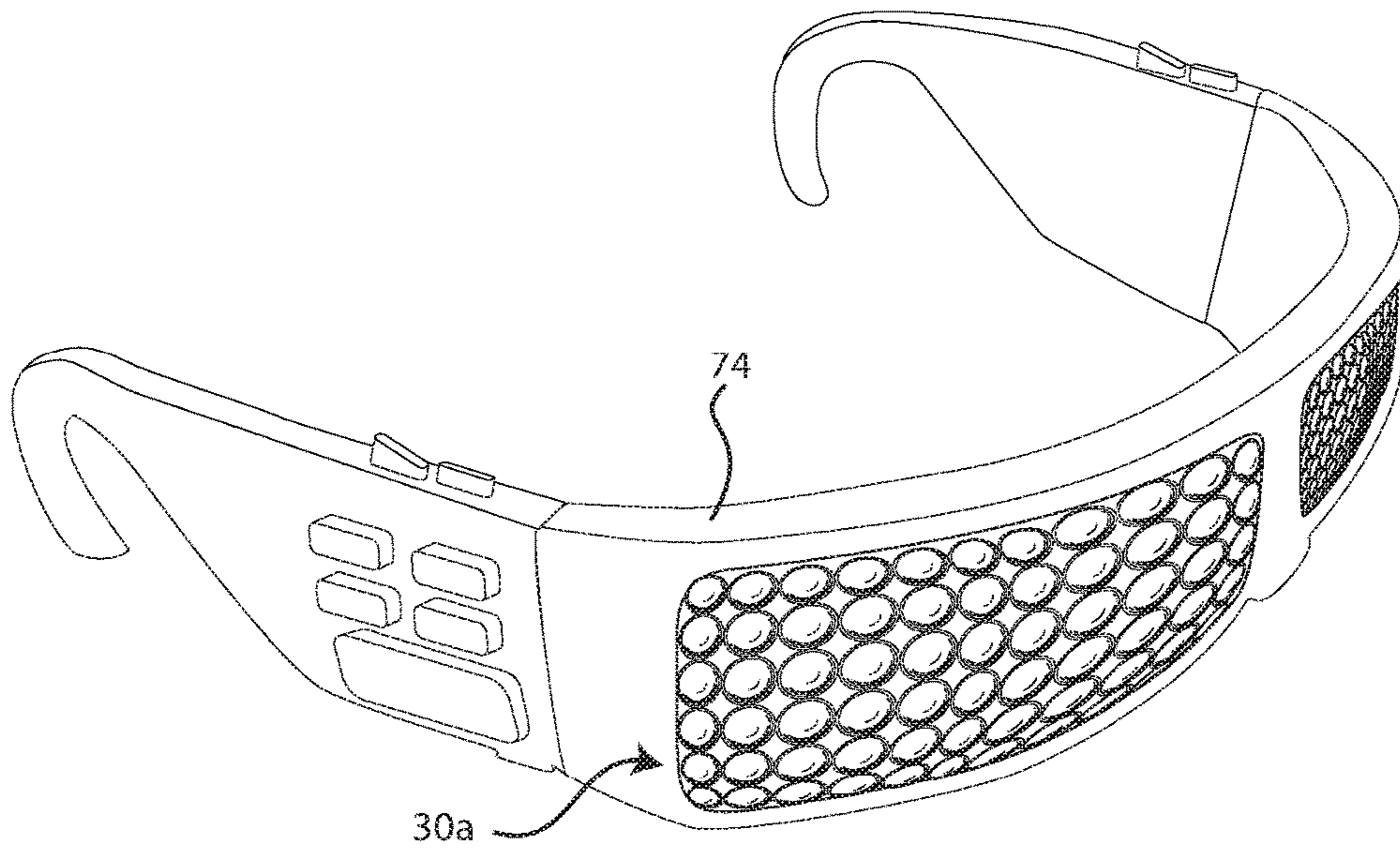


Fig. 7B

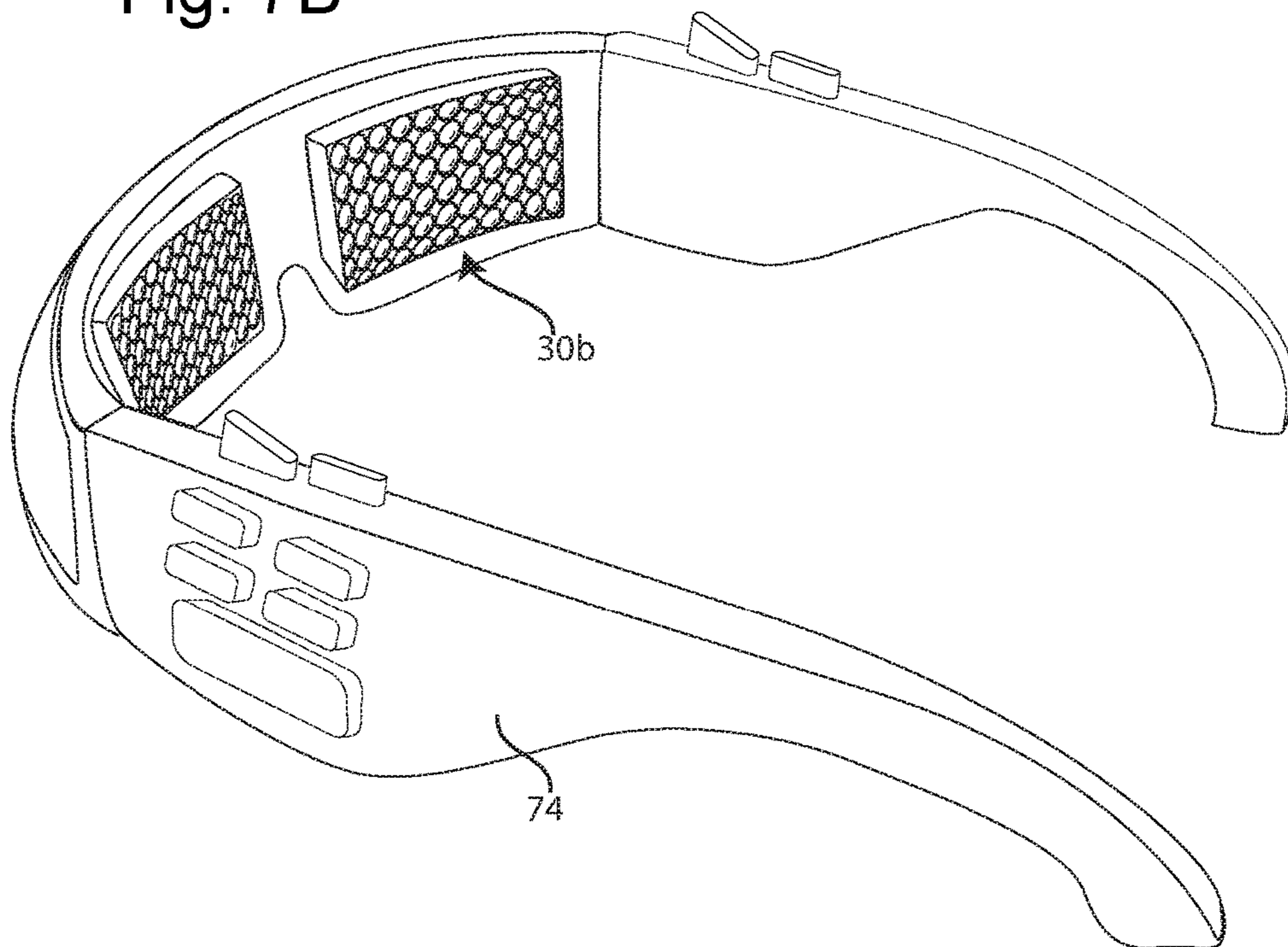


Fig. 7c

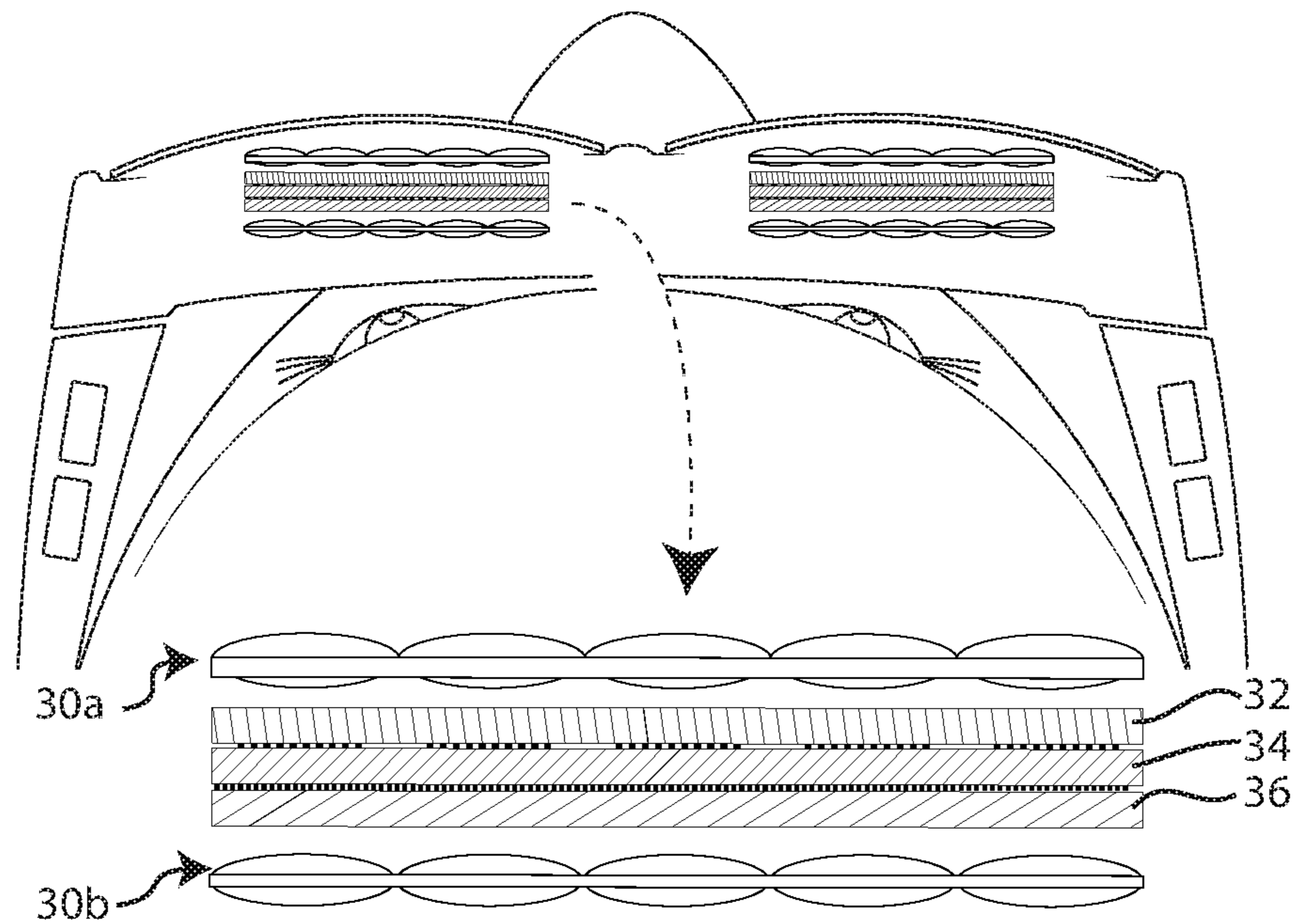
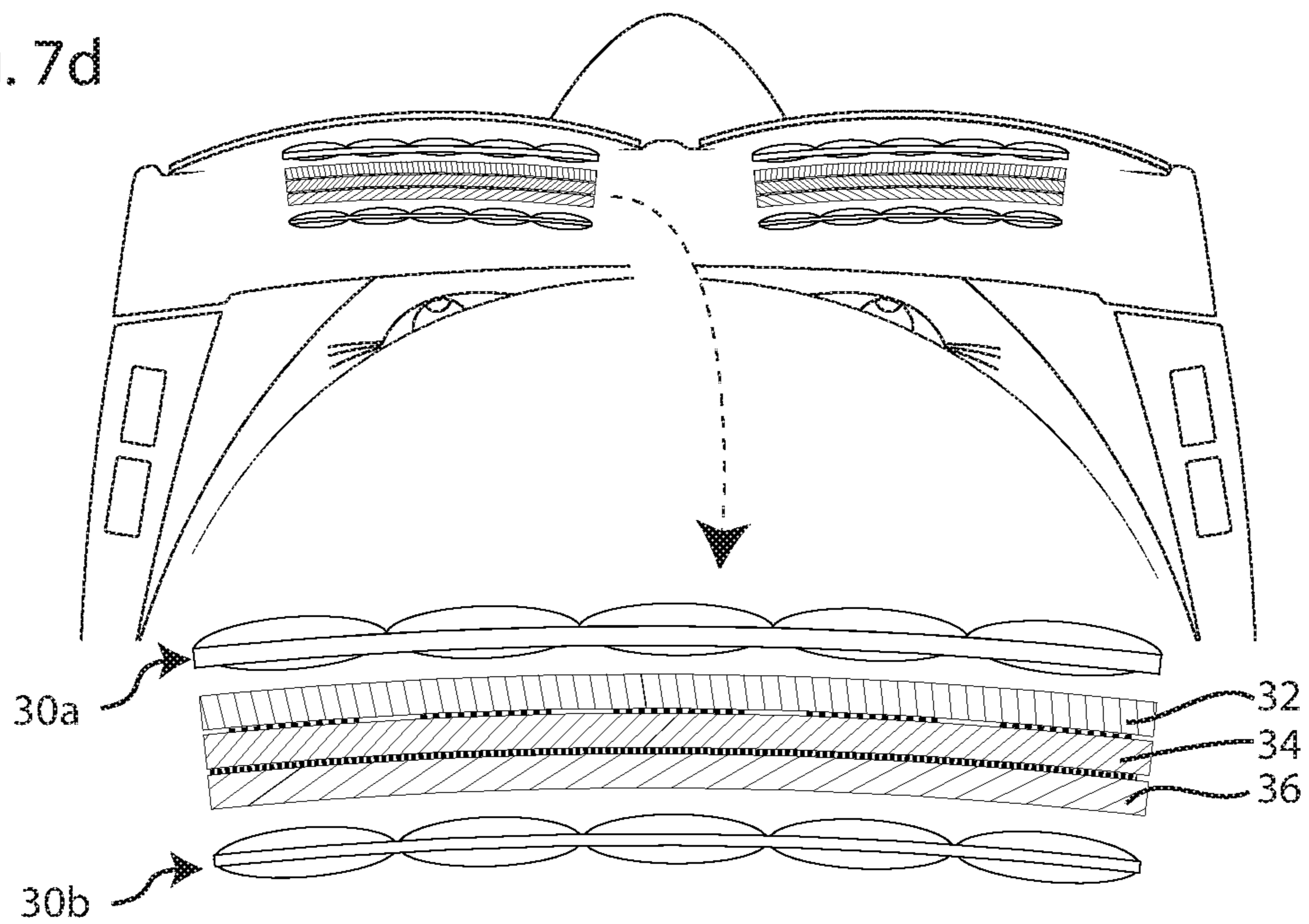


Fig. 7d



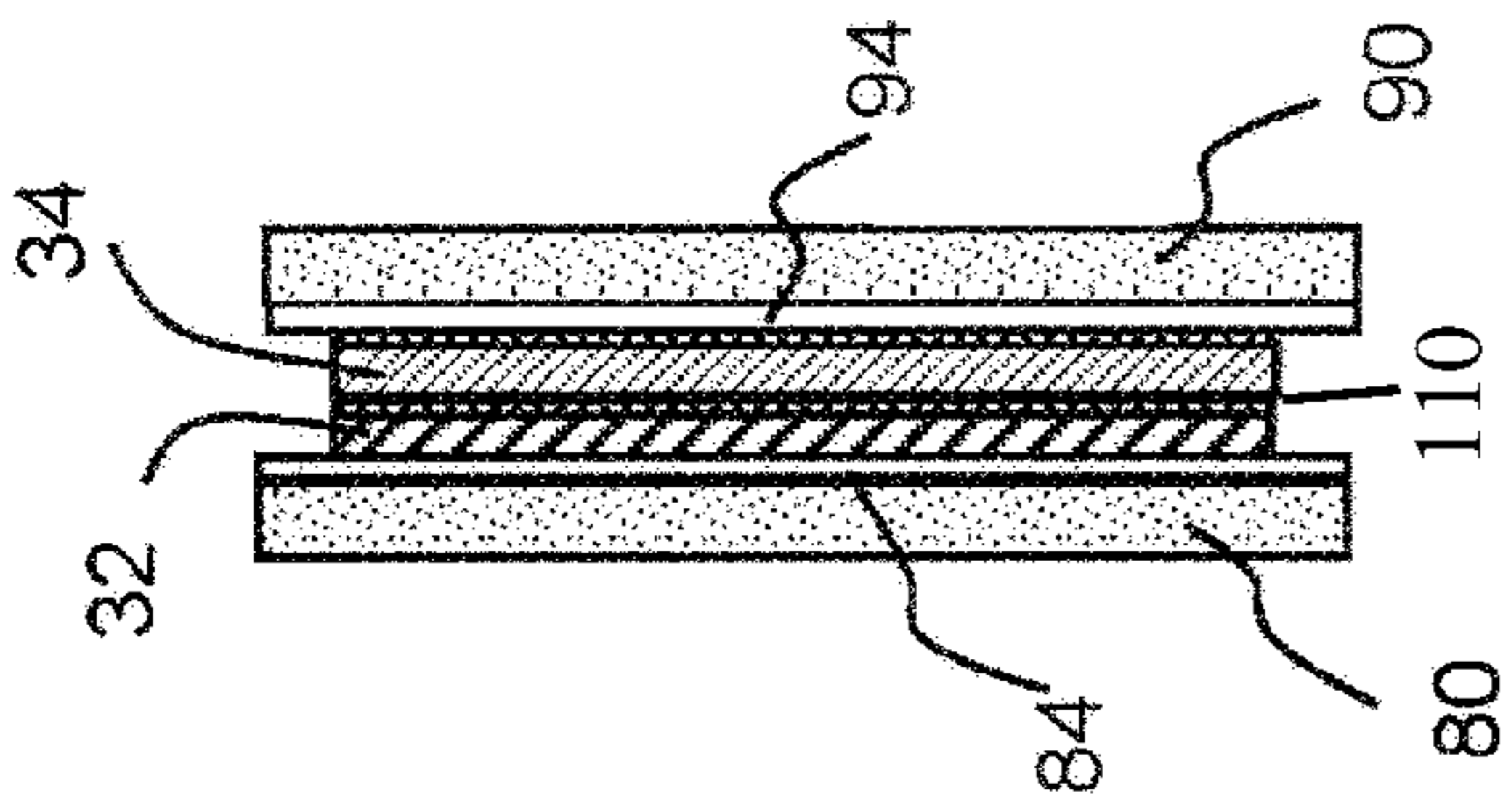


Fig. 8D

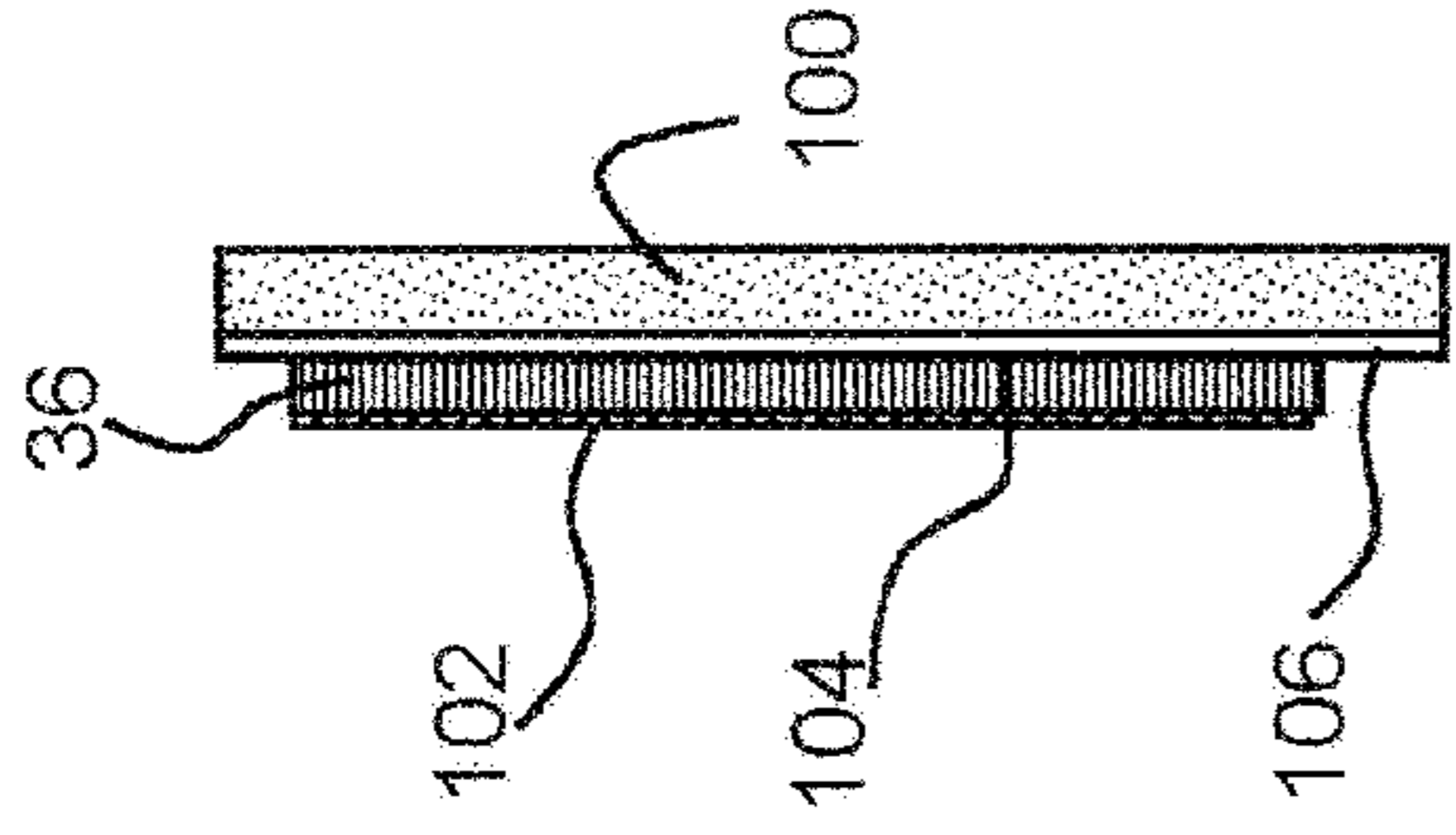


Fig. 8C

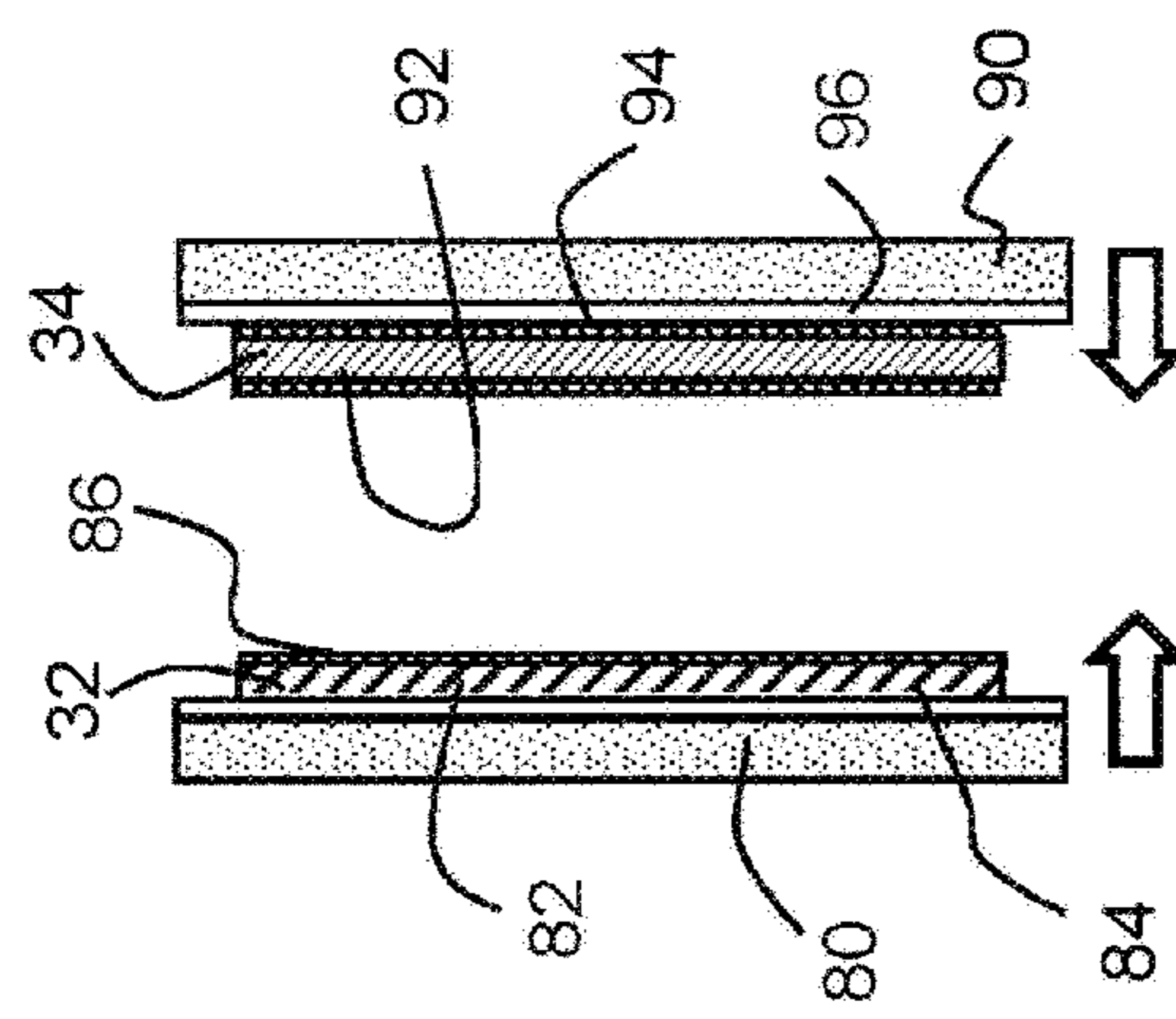


Fig. 8B

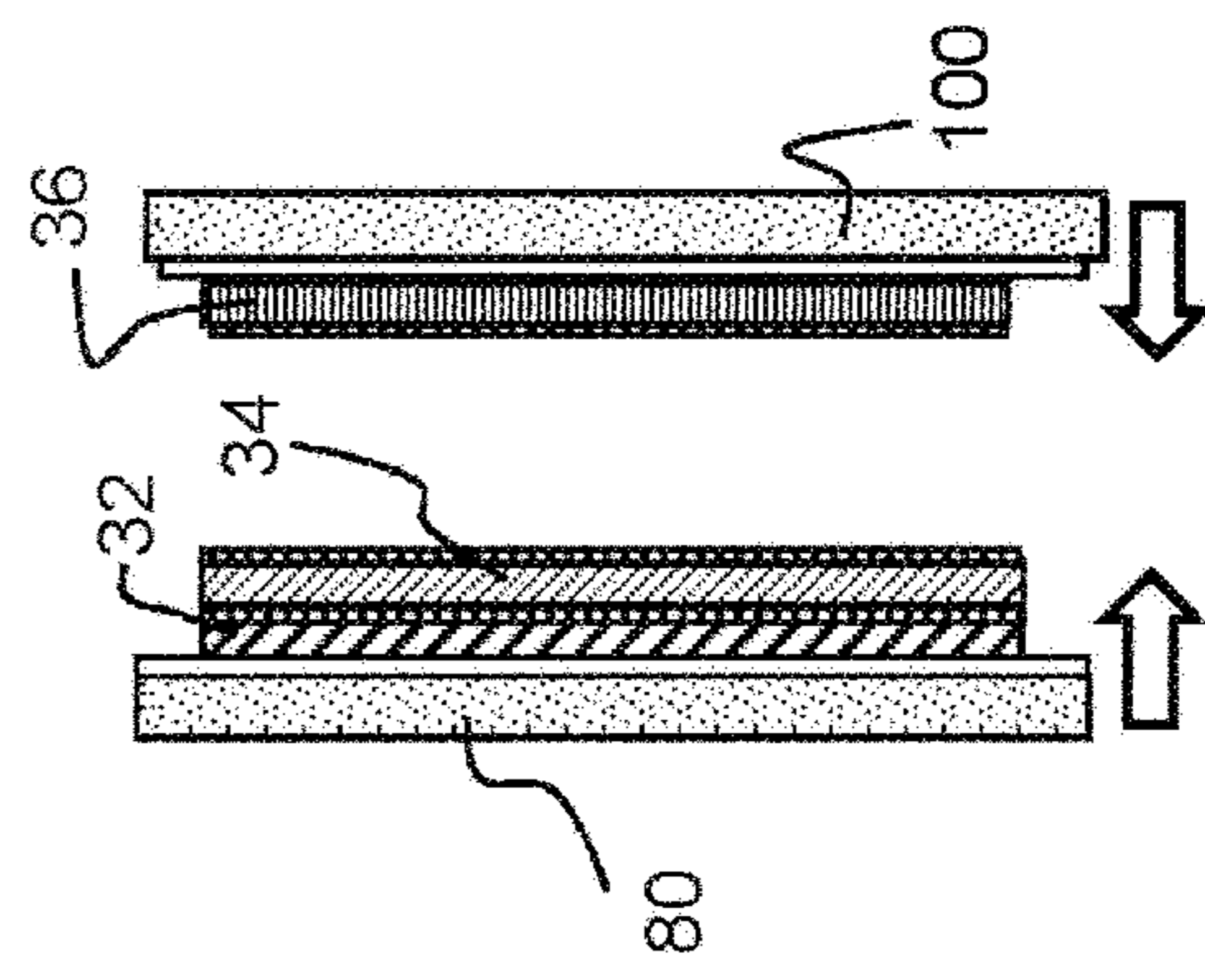


Fig. 8E

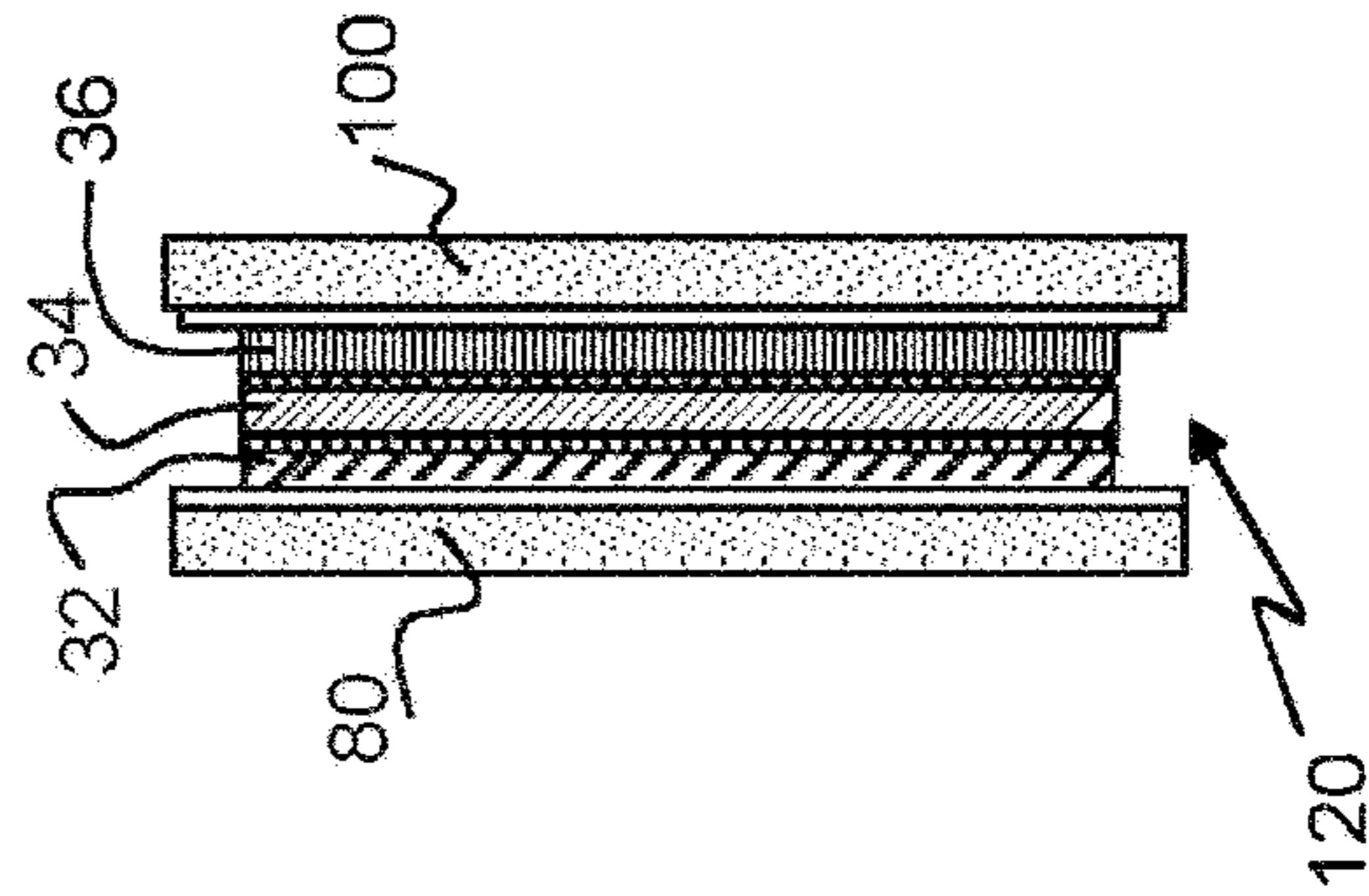


Fig. 8F

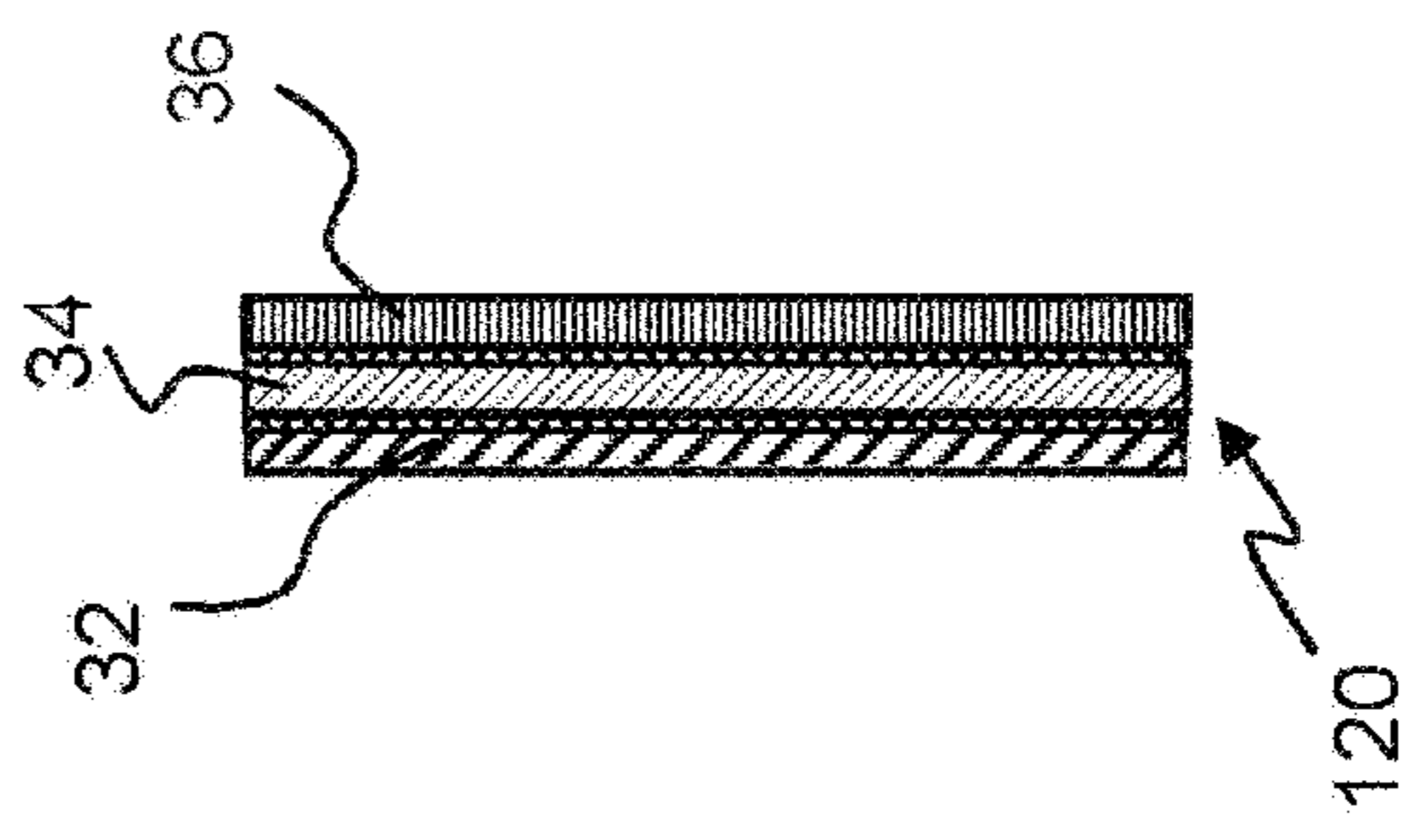


Fig. 8G

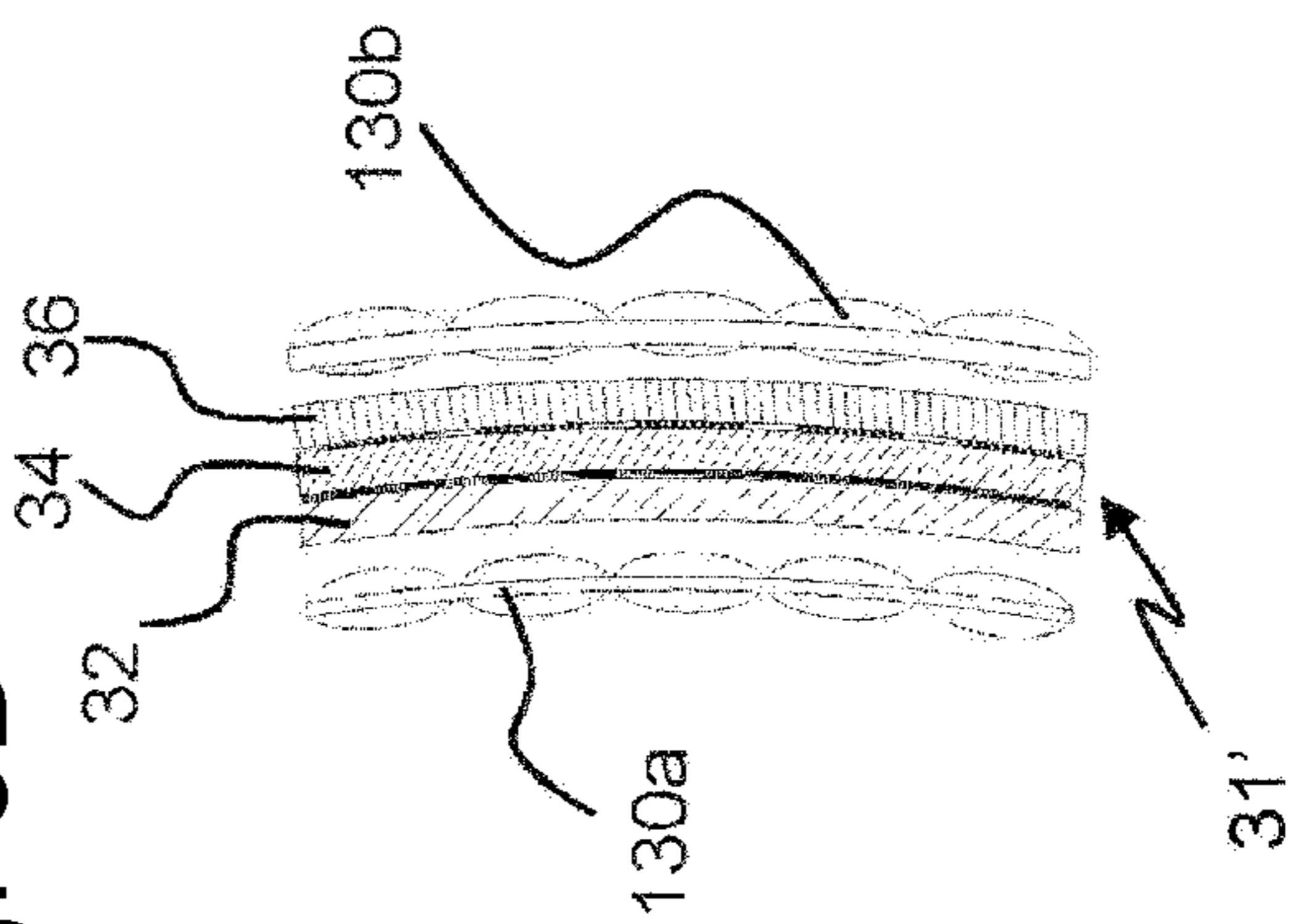


Fig. 8H

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**INTEGRATED MICROOPTIC IMAGER,
PROCESSOR, AND DISPLAY**

PRIORITY

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/119,833 filed on Aug. 31, 2018, and titled "Integrated Microoptic Imager, Processor, and Display", which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/185,437 filed on Jun. 17, 2016, and titled "Integrated Microoptic Imager, Processor, and Display", which is a continuation of PCT Application No. PCT/US2014/070991 filed on Dec. 17, 2014 and titled "Integrated Microoptic Imager, Processor, and Display", which claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/963,928, filed Dec. 17, 2013, "Integrated MicroOptic Imager, Processor, and Display," each of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entireties.

FIELD

This patent application generally relates to a structure for imaging a scene. More particularly, it relates to a stack structure. Even more particularly it relates to a compact stack structure.

BACKGROUND

Imaging devices have required significant space either for optical input or for optical display or both. Applicants recognized that better schemes than those available are needed and such solutions are provided by the following description.

SUMMARY

One aspect of the present patent application is an optical system for displaying light from a scene. The optical system includes an active optical component that includes a first plurality of light directing apertures, an optical detector, a processor, a display, and a second plurality of light directing apertures. The first plurality of light directing apertures is positioned to provide an optical input to the optical detector. The optical detector is positioned to receive the optical input and convert the optical input to an electrical signal corresponding to intensity and location data. The processor is connected to receive the data from the optical detector and process the data for the display. The second plurality of light directing apertures is positioned to provide an optical output from the display.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The foregoing will be apparent from the following detailed description, as illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is an exploded three dimensional view of one embodiment of the active optical component of the present patent application;

FIG. 2 is a block diagram of the embodiment of the active optical component of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3A is a cross sectional view of another embodiment of the active optical component of the present patent application in which detector, processor, and display connect on a common surface;

FIG. 3B is a top view of the detector, processor, and display of FIG. 3A;

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FIG. 4 is a cross sectional view of the embodiment of the active optical component of FIG. 1 in which detector, processor, and display are all in separate layers;

FIG. 5A is a cross sectional view showing the input light directing apertures as a micro-lens array;

FIG. 5B is a cross sectional view showing the input light directing apertures as an array of pinholes;

FIG. 5C is a cross sectional view showing the input light directing apertures as an array of diffraction gratings;

FIG. 6 is a cross sectional view showing the output light directing apertures directing light to form a single image on the retina of a nearby eye;

FIGS. 7A and 7B are three dimensional views showing a curved active optical component of the present patent application included in a pair of glasses;

FIG. 7C is a three dimensional view showing a planar active optical component of the present patent application included in a pair of glasses;

FIG. 7D is a three dimensional views showing a curved active optical component of the present patent application included in a pair of glasses; and

FIGS. 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D, 8E, 8F, and 8G, and 8H are process steps to fabricate a curved active optical component of the present patent application.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In one embodiment, the system uses light directing apertures, such as micro-lens arrays **30a**, **30b** for both the input and output optical elements and uses stacked component **31** including optical detector **32**, processor **34**, and display **36** located between the two light directing apertures **30a**, **30b**, to provide active optical component **40**, as shown in FIG. 1 and in the block diagram in FIG. 2.

Light directing apertures are fabricated of a material such as molded glass, fused silica, acrylic plastic, polycarbonate, Uvex, CR39, and Trivex.

Optical detector **32** includes an array of receptors that receive photons from the scene outside through light directing apertures **30a** and converts the photons to electrical signals corresponding to intensity and location in the scene outside. Optical detector **32** can include a charge coupled device, a complementary metal-oxide semiconductor sensor chip, and such low light detectors as a microchannel amplifier imaging chip combination and an electron bombarded integrated circuit (EBIC), and for short wave infrared at low light level, an InGaAs focal plane array.

In one embodiment optical detector **32** has serial electrical connections for storing image data in memory **42** of processor **34**. In another embodiment, optical detector **32** has multiple parallel connections **58** for storing this image data in memory **42** of processor **34**.

Processor **34** also includes input assembler **44**, arithmetic logic units **46** with data caches **48**, execution manager **50**, central processing unit **52**, and local cache **54** that digitally process the image data from detector **32** and formats the data for display **36**, providing an output through either a wire connector or multiple connectors **56** to display **36**. The images provided on display **36** are seen by the eye of the viewer through optical output light directing apertures **30b**.

In one embodiment, optical detector **32**, processor **34**, and display **36** share a common interconnect surface, which is back surface **60** of display **36**, as shown in FIGS. 3A, and 3B. Detector **32** and processor **34** are interconnected with each other and with display **36** through connectors **62**, **64**, surface wiring (not shown) on back surface **60**.

In another alternative, detector **32**, processor **34** and display **36** are on separate layers, as shown in FIG. **4**. In this embodiment detector **32** and processor **34** have through chip connections **66**, **68** to layer to layer interconnectors **70**, **72**. In one embodiment, processor **34** has a first side and a second side, and the first side is electrically connected to optical detector **32** and the second side is electrically connected to display **36**. Alternatively, standard cable connectors (not shown) are used for the connections from detector **32** to processor **34** and from processor **34** to display **36**.

In one experiment an assembly of input side optics was built and tested with light directing apertures **30a** that were micro-lenses that each had a focal length $f=9.3$ mm and with 3.2 mm apertures in a 3×3 array. The field of view was 20°, the display resolution was 2048 pixels×2048 pixels, and each pixel was 5.5×5.5 microns on a side with an optical resolution of 55 line pairs per degree (lp/°). Each lens of the micro-lens array was a compound lens. Total thickness of the input optics micro lens array was 8.5 mm and the spacing to detector **32** was 1 mm. The lens array was custom diamond turned in Zeonex plastic.

In one experiment an assembly of output side optics was purchased and tested. The resolution was 2 line pairs/degree. The field of view was 17 degrees. The focal length was 3.3 mm. The aperture was 1 mm diameter. Each lens was 3 mm thick molded polycarbonate. The micro lenses were purchased from Fresnel Technologies, Fort Worth, Tex. and were part number 630. The display was a 15×11 mm Sony OLED micro-display, part number ECX322A.

As in the experiment, light directing apertures **30a** can have different dimensions than light directing apertures **30b**.

While light directing apertures **30a**, **30b** are illustrated as micro-lenses, as shown in FIGS. **1**, **2**, and **5A**, light directing apertures can be pinholes, as shown in FIG. **5B**, and diffraction gratings, as shown in FIG. **5C**. Zone plates, holograms, gradient index material, and photonics crystals can also be used. Each lens of a micro-lens array can be compound lens, as shown in FIG. **5A**.

In one embodiment, adjacent ones of the light directing apertures are configured to provide redundant scene elements on detector **32**. Processor **34** includes a program to superimpose data from redundant scene elements, such as data derived from adjacent ones of the plurality of light directing optical apertures, to create a single image with such changes as higher resolution, better signal to noise ratio, and higher contrast, as described in a paper, "Thin observation module by bound optics (TOMBO): concept and experimental verification," by Jun Tanida et al, Applied Optics, Vol. 40, No. 11, 10 Apr. 2001 ("the Tanida paper"), in a paper, "PiCam: An Ultra-Thin High Performance Monolithic Camera Array," by Venkatarama et al, ACM Transactions on Graphics, Proceedings of ACM SIGGRAPH Asia, 32 (5) 2013, both of which are incorporated herein by reference and as described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,754,348 and 8,013,914, both of which are incorporated herein by reference. Processor **34** can also include a program to provide a higher magnification.

Detail of display **36** and output portion **30b** located close to a user's eye is shown in FIG. **6**. Display **36** provides a two dimensional array of similar images of the scene presented to input optics. The user sees display **36** through output apertures **30b**. Wherever the user's eye is located the output apertures **30b** each direct a portion of their respective subimage so that a single image is formed on the retina from a combination of contributions from each lens, as described in the US20140168783 patent application, incorporated herein by reference and in a paper, "Near-Eye Light Field

Displays," by Douglas Lanman and David Luebke, ACM Transactions on Graphics, Proceedings of ACM SIGGRAPH Asia, 32 (6) November 2013, article number 220. This scheme allows display **36** and output portion **30b** to be located close to the user's eye, such as on a pair of glasses.

In one embodiment, an external electronic device is connected to processor **34** through connector **56** for providing information on display **36**. The external electronic device may be a communications system, a wifi, a GPS, a remote camera, another wearable optical system, a microphone, a digital compass, an accelerometer, a vehicle instrument, and an external computer. In one embodiment, the external information is provided on the display to overlay information from the scene, as described in U.S. Pat. No. 7,250,983, incorporated herein by reference. The system can thus augment what the viewer is seeing with overlaid information, for example, information about the subject or object being viewed. The overlaid information can be data that was previously stored.

In one embodiment, the system augments a user's vision by displaying images captured in wavelength bands including visible (0.4 to 0.7 microns), near infrared (0.7 to 1.0 microns), and short wave infrared (1.0 to 2.5 microns). With appropriate detectors, the system can also display images showing combinations, such as visible and near infrared, visible and short wave infrared, near infrared and short wave infrared, and visible, near infrared and short wave infrared. With appropriate detectors the system can also display images from objects providing light in other bands, including ultraviolet (0.2 to 0.4 micron), mid-wave infrared (2.5 to 6 micron), and long-wave infrared (6 to 14 micron). The system can thus augment user's vision by displaying images of the subject or object in a non-visible wavelength band. Well known detectors in the various wavelength bands can be used, as described in "Infrared Detectors: an overview," by Antoni Rogalski, in Infrared Physics & Technology 43 (2002) 187-210.

The present applicants found that with the multi-aperture array there is no change in the solid angle subtended as compared with using a single input lens. Nor is there a change in the flux of light collected by each pixel of the detector as compared with using a single input lens. They found that noise reduction was accomplished and resolution improved by using weighted averages of surrounding pixels as described in the Tanida paper.

The thickness of active optical component **40** is sufficiently reduced in this embodiment compared to previously existing devices, while the output light directing aperture **30b** allows the system to be located near the user's eye, so a pair of active optical components **40** can be mounted to replace the ordinary lenses in a pair of glasses **74**, as shown in FIGS. **7A-7D**. In one alternative, glasses with the active optical components **40** can be worn over an ordinary pair of glasses. In another alternative, the glasses may have only one of the ordinary lenses so replaced, allowing normal vision with one eye. Light directing apertures **30a**, **30b** and stacked component **31** may be planar as shown in FIG. **7C** or they may be curved as shown in FIGS. **7A-7B** and **7D**.

Curved semiconductor components are described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,027,958, 6,953,735, and 8,764,255 and US patent application 21040004644, all of which are incorporated herein by reference. Curved stacked components may include thinned crystalline silicon for detector and processor. Thinned silicon will roll up. It is sufficiently flexible that it can have different curvature in each of two dimensions. Other semiconductors are similarly flexible when thinned. Thinning is also advantageous for through silicon contacts.

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Display **36** is fabricated on a flexible substrate. Arrays of light directing apertures **30a**, **30b**, can also be fabricated with curves.

A process to fabricate curved stacked component **31'** is shown in FIGS. **8A-8G**. Detector **32** is grown epitaxially on the sacrificial oxide insulator surface of silicon-on insulator substrate **80**, as shown in FIG. **8A**, with active side **82** of detector **32** facing oxide insulator **84** and its back surface **86** with electrical contacts exposed. As grown, detector **32** is in the range from 2 to 20 microns thick.

Processor **34** is grown epitaxially on the sacrificial oxide insulator surface of silicon-on-insulator substrate **90**, as shown in FIG. **8B**, with active surface **92** and its electrical connections to detector **32** exposed and with its electrical contacts **94** for contact to the display facing oxide insulator **96**. As grown, processor **34** is in the range from 2 to 20 microns thick.

Display **36** is grown epitaxially on the sacrificial oxide insulator surface of silicon-on-insulator substrate **100**, as shown in FIG. **8C**, with its electrical connections to the processor **102** exposed and with its display elements facing oxide insulator **106**. As grown, display **36** is in the range from 10 to 30 microns thick. In one embodiment the display base material layer is silicon. Display elements may include metalization, deposited light emitting diodes, mirrors, and dielectric materials.

In the next step electrical contacts between detector wafer **32** and processor wafer **34** are aligned, as shown in FIG. **8D**, and detector wafer **32** is bonded to processor wafer **34** using a standard contact to contact bonding method such as solder bonding or compression bonding.

In the next step detector-processor stack **110** is released from processor substrate wafer **90** using a process such as hydrofluoric acid or zenon difluoride, as shown in FIG. **8E**.

In the next step the now exposed electrical connections of processor **34** are aligned and bonded to display **36** electrical contacts using a process such as solder bonding or compression bonding, as shown in FIG. **8F**.

In the next step detector-processor-display stack **120** is released from both display substrate wafer **100** and from detector substrate wafer **80**, as shown in FIG. **8G**. The detector-processor-display stack is now flexible and has its electrical contacts aligned for electrical communication between layers. In addition, an electrical lead brought out to the edge of stack **120** or on the outside surface of either detector **32** or display **36** is used for connection to bring in power from a battery and signal from an external electronic device. Through connectors allow power brought in to one to be distributed to all three layers. The battery can be mounted elsewhere, such as in the glasses frame.

In the next step the detector-processor-display stack is aligned with and connected with rigid input curved lens array **130a** and output curved lens array **130b** fabricated as molded optics, conforming to their curvature, as shown in FIG. **8h**, to provide curved stack **31'**.

While several embodiments, together with modifications thereof, have been described in detail herein and illustrated in the accompanying drawings, it will be evident that various further modifications are possible without departing from the scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims. Nothing in the above specification is intended to limit the invention more narrowly than the appended claims. The examples given are intended only to be illustrative rather than exclusive.

What is claimed is:

1. An optical system for displaying light from a scene, comprising:

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a see-through optical system including:

- a first microlens array,
- an optical detector,
- a processor;
- a display; and
- a second microlens array,

wherein, the first microlens array, optical detector, processor, and display, and second microlens array are arranged such that the optical detector is in-between the first microlens array and the processor, the processor is in-between the optical detector and the display, the display is in-between the processor and the second microlens array,

wherein each of the optical detector, the processor, and the display are electronically coupled to each other, and wherein a total stacked height of the see-through optical system is less than 70 microns.

2. An optical system according to claim 1, wherein the optical detector is configured to convert the optical input into an electrical signal corresponding to intensity and location data of the light.

3. An optical system according to claim 2, wherein the processor receives and processes the electrical signal from the optical detector so as to produce an image for the display.

4. An optical system according to claim 3, wherein the second microlens array is positioned to provide an optical output derived from the image on the display.

5. An optical system according to claim 1, further comprising an eyeglasses frame having left and right lenses, wherein the see-through optical system is sized and configured to replace a portion of one of the left or right lenses.

6. An optical system according to claim 1, wherein see-through optical system is curved.

7. An optical system according to claim 1, wherein the first microlens array includes one or more of a lens, a pinhole, a diffraction grating, a zone plate, a hologram, a gradient index material, and/or a photonics crystals.

8. An optical system according to claim 1, wherein adjacent members of the first microlens array provide redundant scene elements, and wherein the processor uses the redundant scene elements to adjust at least one from the group consisting of: a signal to noise ratio, a contrast, and a resolution.

9. An optical system according to claim 1, further comprising an external electronic device, wherein the external electronic device provides information to the processor, and wherein the processor overlays the information on the display as an image derived from the information.

10. An optical system according to claim 1, wherein the optical detector, the processor, and the display interconnect on a common surface.

11. An optical system according to claim 1, wherein the see-through optical system is sized and configured to be a visual prosthetic device suitable for wearing on a user's eye.

12. A visual assistance device suitable for wearing on a user's eye, the visual assistance comprising:

- a processor, a display, optical detector, and at least one active optical component, wherein the processor, optical detector, and the display are electronically coupled to each other on a common side, and

wherein a total stacked height of the processor, optical detector, display, and at least one active optical component is less than 70 microns.

13. A visual assistance device according to claim 12, wherein the processor, optical detector, display, and at least one active optical component allows the user at least a

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partial view through a stacked combination of the processor, optical detector, display, and at least one active optical component.

14. A visual assistance device according to claim 12, wherein the optical detector is positioned to receive an optical input from the first light directing device.

15. A visual assistance device according to claim 14, wherein the optical detector is configured to convert the optical input into an electrical signal corresponding to intensity and location data of the light.

16. A visual assistance device according to claim 15, wherein the processor receives and processes the electrical signal from the optical detector so as to transmit an image to the display.

17. A visual assistance device according to claim 16, wherein the at least one active optical component is positioned to provide an optical output derived from the image on the display.

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18. A visual assistance device according to claim 17, wherein the at least one active optical component is a two-dimensional array of light directing apertures.

19. A visual assistance device according to claim 18, wherein the processor is located between the optical detector and the display.

20. A visual assistance device according to claim 19, wherein the optical detector, the processor, and the display interconnect on a common side surface.

21. A visual assistance device according to claim 20, wherein the optical detector, the processor and the display are on distinct, separate layers, wherein the processor has a first side and a second side, and wherein the first side is electrically connected to the optical detector and wherein the second side is electrically connected to the display.

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